

Crop Conditions as of May 22, 2008

Welcome to the 2008 Alberta crop reporting series. The release schedule for 2008 Alberta crop reports is available on the Ropin' the Web at: [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/sdd4191](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/sdd4191)

The rain received this week has brought much needed moisture across the province. The replenished soil moisture reserves will help crops to emerge, as seeds were planted into dry soil in many areas. Provincially, seeding is estimated at 75 percent complete, compared to 11 percent two weeks ago, and about 80 percent at this time in most years. Table 1 below gives an indication of 2008 seeding progress to date in Alberta, for major crops by region.

Some early seeded crops have emerged or are emerging. Many areas have reported slow and uneven emergence, due to cool, dry conditions this spring. Spraying for post-emergence weed control has just begun, primarily on fall-seeded crops in the Southern Region. Some pest problems have been reported, including flea beetles, cutworms and wireworms.

Resulting from the rain received this week, soil moisture conditions have improved, especially at the surface level. Provincially, surface moisture is rated as six percent poor, 20 percent fair, 48 percent good, 24 percent excellent, and two percent excessive, while sub-surface moisture is reported as 14 percent poor, 32 percent fair, 40 percent good, 13 percent excellent, and one percent excessive. Lack of moisture reserves, particularly at the sub-surface level, is still a major concern in the Southern Region and in some eastern areas of the Central Region.

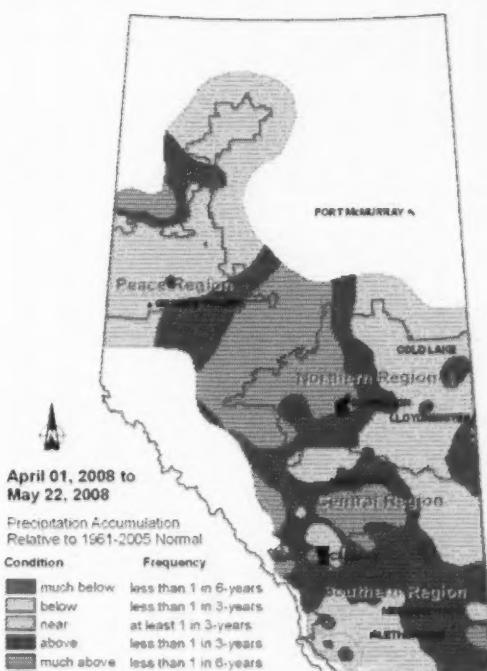
In most areas of the province, pasture and tame hay are off to a slow start, due to the cool, dry conditions this spring (prior to the rain this week). However, the moisture received this week is expected to improve pasture and tame hay growth. Provincially, pasture is rated as 16 percent poor, 33 percent fair, 46 percent good, and five percent excellent, with a similar rating reported for tame hay.

Compared to most years, soil erosion this spring is less severe, with only a few areas reporting moderate soil erosion from winds or winter/spring run-off.

Table 1: Estimates of Regional/Provincial Crop Seeding Progress, 2008

	South	Central	N. East	N. West	Peace	Alberta
Spring Wheat	85%	82%	80%	88%	63%	80%
Durum Wheat	90%	86%	70%	80%	60%	88%
Oats	60%	56%	58%	59%	45%	55%
Barley	83%	66%	62%	64%	39%	69%
Canola	90%	84%	82%	89%	62%	80%
Dry Peas	99%	94%	88%	99%	67%	91%
All Crops	85%	75%	75%	75%	60%	75%

Source: Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development



Our thanks to Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen, staff of AFSC and the Alberta Ag-Info Centre for their partnership and contribution to the Alberta Crop Reporting Program.

REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS:

The 2008 Alberta Crop Report Series continues to provide summaries for the following five regions:

Region One: Southern (Strathmore, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Foremost)

- The rain received this week has brought much needed moisture across the region. As a result, soil moisture conditions have improved, particularly at the surface level. Overall, surface moisture is reported as 18 percent poor, 40 percent fair, 36 percent good, and six percent excellent, while the rating of sub-surface moisture is 25 percent poor, 46 percent fair, 26 percent good, and three percent excellent. More precipitation is still needed in the region. Also, there are reports of some hay crop being irrigated.
- Seeding progress has been rapid prior to the rain this week. Overall, seeding for major crops is estimated at 85 percent complete. For specialty crops, estimates of seeding progress are 100 percent for sugar beets, 95 percent for chickpeas and potatoes, 85 percent for mustard seeds, and 45 percent for dry beans. Early-seeded crops have already emerged or started to emerge. In some areas, re-seeding of fall-seeded crops has occurred. Also, due to cool, dry conditions this spring, pasture and tame hay are off to a slow start.

Region Two: Central (Rimbey, Airdrie, Coronation, Oyen)

- The rain received this week has improved soil moisture conditions, especially in the eastern areas of the region. Overall, surface moisture is rated as two percent poor, 10 percent fair, 44 percent good, 41 percent excellent, and three percent excessive, while sub-surface moisture is reported as nine percent poor, 29 percent fair, 33 percent good, 27 percent excellent, and two percent excessive.
- Estimates of seeding completion range from 80 percent to 95 percent in areas along the Saskatchewan border, but only 40 percent to 50 percent in some western parts of the region. Overall, seeding is estimated at about 75 percent complete in the region.
- Despite showing some growth, pasture and tame hay development is slower than in most years.

Region Three: North East (Smoky Lake, Vermilion, Camrose, Provost)

- As a result of the rain this week, soil moisture conditions have improved significantly, particularly at the surface level. Overall, surface moisture is reported as four percent poor, 27 percent fair, 61 percent good, and eight percent excellent, while the rating of sub-surface moisture is 24 percent poor, 37 percent fair, 34 percent good, and five percent excellent.
- Producers in the region have made good progress in seeding prior to the rain received this week. Overall, seeding is estimated at about 75 percent complete.
- Pasture and tame hay conditions are improving, but development is slower than in most years.

Region Four: North West (Barrhead, Edmonton, Leduc, Drayton Valley, Athabasca)

- Seeding was progressing rapidly prior to the rain received this week. Overall, seeding is estimated at about 75 percent complete in the region.
- Soil moisture reserves at the surface level are favorable, mostly as a result of the rain received this week. Overall, surface moisture is rated as two percent poor, 13 percent fair, 55 percent good, 28 percent excellent, and two percent excessive, while sub-surface moisture is reported as 10 percent poor, 27 percent fair, 52 percent good, and 11 percent excellent.
- Pasture and tame hay growth is generally slow, due to the cool, dry conditions this spring.

Region Five: Peace River (Fairview, Falher, Grande Prairie, Valleyview)

- The rain this week has brought various amounts of precipitation to the region, and also halted field operations. Seeding is more advanced in the southern parts of the region at about 70-80 percent complete, while for the northern areas of the region, seeding is only 35-50 percent done. Overall, seeding is about 60 percent completed in the region. Early seeded crops have already emerged or started to emerge.
- In general, soil moisture reserves are adequate, with some localized areas reporting excessive moisture. Overall, surface moisture is rated as three percent poor, 14 percent fair, 46 percent good, 33 percent excellent, and four percent excessive, while sub-surface moisture is reported as four percent poor, 18 percent fair, 57 percent good, 17 percent excellent, and four percent excessive.
- Pasture and tame hay are showing good growth, mostly as a result of favorable moisture conditions.

**Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development
Economics and Competitiveness Division
Statistics and Data Development Unit
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